

## Convict Labor.

One of the most important topics now being discussed is the convict labor question, and whether or not it is better to continue the present system of leasing the penitentiary or for the state to assume control of it. We notice that quite a number of strong petitions have been presented to the Legislature, asking that the leasing system be abandoned and the state take charge of the matter. We are certainly in favor of this measure, and are also opposed to the hiring out of convicts. When a person is convicted of crime and sentenced to the penitentiary for a term of years, we think the sentence should be carried out to the letter, and that such a person should be confined within the prison walls until his sentence expires or he is pardoned out. Under the present system persons convicted of minor offenses and sent up for short terms, spend very little of their time in the penitentiary, but are hired out as farm hands, railroad laborers, etc. We are opposed to this for many reasons.

In the first place it gives convicts a good opportunity to escape, and when once free, with a price for his head, the convict becomes desperate, knowing that any act he may commit can only consign him back to the same punishment he has just escaped. Then a number of guards are required to look after these men while at work, and to the shame of the state be it said that too little regard for the lives of these poor unfortunates has been manifested by those who have been employed to watch over them. Convicts have been shot down without provocation by brutal men who were placed over them, and we have heard of no instance where the murderer has been punished. The contractor looks upon the convicts he hires as so much "stock," which he controls for a time, and the more work he can get out of them at the smallest outlay to himself the better. In consequence of this convicts are cruelly treated, some times nearly starved, and when the complaint is made no attention is paid to it because the party making it is "only a convict."

Another reason why we are opposed to the present system is that this convict labor comes in contact with the legitimate labor of the country, thereby cutting down the price and creating dissatisfaction. It has ever been said that it offers a premium for crime, inasmuch as criminals are frequently allowed the privileges of freemen, under the "trust" system as now practiced. The champions of the lesser plan claim that the number of convicts is so great and prison room so limited that it would be impossible to confine all the state prisoners within the walls of the penitentiary. This we do not deny, but a reform in this part of our government has long been needed. All have acknowledged the wisdom of Governor Robert's suggestion to establish reformatory institutions for boys, women and minor criminals, and there is no better time for carrying out the policy than now. The establishment of such institutions would not only give more room in the penitentiary for long term convicts, but would work a reformation in crime that has long been prayed for. Besides, the majority of criminals are idlers before conviction, and by keeping them within the walls and forcing them to learn some useful trade, they will, at the expiration of their terms, be better prepared to gain a livelihood by honest labor than they did before. It is our desire to incarcerate men in the dark, unhealthy cells, merely to punish them for crimes committed, but we believe in making our state prison self-sustaining, the labor of the prisoners furnishing means to keep it up. By this we mean that they shall be employed within the walls, in manufactures, such as will find ready sale throughout the state, and not be bartered about to Tom, Dick and Harry, to be butchered up or allowed to escape, as is too frequently the case under the present system.

## He Struck Billy Patterson.

The Franklin Register has discovered who struck Billy Patterson. Mr. Patterson, the father of Madame Bonaparte, was a wealthy Baltimorean. Upon one occasion, while Mr. Patterson was in Franklin looking after his property, a general row occurred among the boys, in which he was involved. In the confusion, indeed, some one struck Mr. Patterson a tremendous blow, and this so angered him that he walked through the crowd, inquiring in stentorian tones, "Who struck Billy Patterson?" Mr. Patterson was a large and powerful man, and under the circumstances, no one among the fighters appeared desirous of holding himself responsible. The inquiry passed into a by-word and even to this day the inquiry can be heard, "Who struck Billy Patterson?" The original Billy pursued the inquiry

with astonishing vigor, but without avail, and at his death, curiously enough inserted a clause in his will setting apart \$1,000 to be paid to the person who should give to his heirs or executor the name of the man who struck him. The fight in which Billy Patterson was struck occurred in 1783, and it is passing strange that just 100 years after a claim should be put in for the reward. And yet a correspondent of the Register says such in the case:

A Mrs. Jennie G. Covely, of Atnol, N.Y., daughter of George W. Tillerton, has written to the ordinary, of Franklin county, claiming this legacy of \$1,000. She states that she is an invalid, aged and infirm, and in great need of money. In 1783 her father was quite a young man, and, being in great dread of Mr. Patterson, fled the country at once and never heard of the reward or legacy. She says she has often heard her father speak of the fight and the blow he gave Mr. Patterson, and the fierce anger of the latter. The thumb of Tillerton's hand was dislocated by the blow and was so severely injured that it remained a useless member to the day of his death. As the facts she gives correspond so exactly with the facts of the case, the correspondent presumes that Mrs. Covely will receive the legacy without delay.

## The Climate of the South.

If there were no other reason for believing that in a very few years from now the population of the old slave States will be augmented by tens of thousands of valuable citizens from the North and West, the climate alone would afford basis for that expectation.

In the northern and western states, the autumns, the springs, and the summers are healthy enough, but the winters are dangerously as well disagreeably severe. And while the pleasant autumns, springs and summers are short and salubrious, the severe winters are long and all the time threatening health with diseases that strike at the very sources of life. The winters of the South not only begin late and end early, but even in the most northern of the southern States it is exceptional for cold weather in mid-winter to be cold enough for half a dozen consecutive days, to interfere with work out of doors.

Southern harbors are open all winter; southern rivers and creeks run on through all seasons, with rare interruptions from the ice; southern railroads are comparatively free from the obstructive snow-storms; southern fields respond promptly and warmly to the farmer's awakening touch, with their early fruits and vegetables. In a word, the climate of the south must, every year, become more and more an irresistible attraction to the northern and western men as, every year, they must become more acquainted with the enjoyments, the immunities and the material advantages it affords.

## A New Kind of Sweil.

Late advices from your city announce that you have no "dudes" there. Do you know what a "dude" is? The name was just given, I think, in one of our daily papers, to a curious specimen of the genus homo which has lately appeared in New York. He is young, thin, pale, often hatchet-faced, almost always narrow-chested and small-limbed. His extremely tight trousers painfully accentuate his lack of brea. His coat and long overcoat are fine exaggerated imitation of the Bond street style, and in the evening he wears a very abbreviated "over-coat." This garment, in its normal use, has a raison d'être. It is worn at "cover" over the short, red coat of the hunter, but the "dude" wears it over evening dress, producing an effect which is amusing to the minds of the uninstructed. I saw a "dude" at Newport last summer, at whom the people were laughing very much on account of this same effect. As the tails of the dress coat came quite a distance below the bottom of the "cover-coat," the inevitable inference was that the lining of the former had come out. The shoes of the "dude" should be the shape of an Esquimaux kyack, or canoe, and he wears a broad-brimmed high English silk hat, especially at theatres and concerts, where it is the most in the way. In his mouth, finally, the cigaret finds a permanent home, as do the lilies of the valley in his buttonhole. He may be seen in quantities in Delmoico's cafe, and he is a study.

NOMINALLY a car-load is 20,000 pounds. It is also 70 barrels of salt, 70 of lime, 90 of flour, 60 of soft wood, 18 or 20 cattle, 50 or 60 head of hogs, 30 to 100 head of sheep, 9,000 feet of solid boards, 17,000 feet of siding, 13,000 feet of flooring, 40,000 shingles, one-half less hard lumber, one-fourth less green lumber, and one-tenth less of joist, scantling, and other large timbers, 340 bushels of wheat, 400 of corn, 680 of oats, 400 of barley, 360 of flaxseed, 360 of apples, 430 of Irish potatoes, 360 of sweet potatoes, and 1,000 bushels of bran.

## An Adventure With a Bear.

A farmer's wife in Wytheville, Va., was frying meat for dinner at her house situated near a mountain range in a rather wild and sequestered place, her husband in the meantime being at work some distance from the building. The savory order of the bacon was scented by a couple of young bears who were ranging on the premises, and it enticed them to follow the direction from which it came. They kept the scent until it even drew them into the house where the meat was on the fry. The lady of the house secured the strange visitors, and the knowledge of bears led her to think that these young ones had strayed from their parent, which would soon follow their trail and hunt them up. Her judgment was correct, for it was not long before the old she bear came in sight—an enormous black bruin of a kind which will fight to death for their young. The woman drew from its rack, the old true, tried and trusty mountain rifle, that had served on similar missions to that on which it was about to be called, before, and fastening the door, she made a loop-hole of the window and waited the approach of her beefship within sufficient distance for a shot. She waited not long and fired, the ball taking effect, but not proving fatal. The report of her rifle drew her laboring husband from his work, who coming near the house, was chased several yards by the bear, who then gave up pursuit and returned in quest of her young. The plucky backwoodsman's wife had in the meantime reloaded the rifle, and with a second shot the old she bear keeled over, underside topmost and "yielded up the ghost."

## Shipping vs. Driving.

Contracts have been made with the Gulf, Colorado and Santa Fe and the I. and G. N. railroads to transport about 50,000 head of young steers from various shipping points south of San Antonio to Vinita and Wichita Falls. The shipment of these cattle if successful, will put an end to the Texas cattle drive of this country. Hereafter all the young cattle south of Austin will go by rail, instead of over the long, tedious, expensive trail to Kansas and other Northern States. We fear the railroad facilities will be inadequate to the demand for this year, but we hope now that contracts have been closed, railroad companies will use every effort to furnish the transportation necessary. It will take 100 cars to haul an ordinary herd and its outfit of horses, and unless some of the roads get more stock cars, they will find that to move the cattle already contracted is a bigger job than they expected. If the railroad companies will act liberally, they will inaugurate a trade that will pay them a very large revenue in after years.—Stock Journal.

## Mahogany.

The mahogany tree, says the *Lumber World*, is a native of the West Indies, the Bahamas and that portion of Central America that lies adjacent to the Bay of Honduras, and has also been found in Florida. It is stated to be of moderately rapid growth, reaching its full maturity in about 200 years. Full grown, it is one of the monarchs of tropical America. Its trunk, which often exceeds forty feet in length and six in diameter, and massive arms, rising to a lofty height and spreading with graceful sweep over immense spaces, covered with beautiful foliage, bright, glossy, light and airy, clinging so long to the spray as to make it almost like an evergreen, present a rare combination of loveliness and grandeur. The leaves are small, delicate and polished like the laurel. The flowers are small and white or greenish yellow. The fruit is a hard, woody capsule, oval—not unlike the head of a turkey in size and shape—and contains five cells, in each of which are inclosed about fifteen seeds.

## Newspaper Circulation.

The Paris *Figaro*, which published Prince Jerome Napoleon's manifesto, issued 300,000 containing it. A circulation of 100,000 and 150,000 is not uncommon in a Paris or a London paper, but it is very rare, if ever, that these figures are reached by our metropolitan journals. Our population is not homogeneous. New York for instance, contains more Germans than any second class German city. Then it has more Irish than any city in Ireland except Dublin. And so, all our large cities have a number of foreign-speaking inhabitants. Hence the smaller circulation of our daily journals is due to the impediments of language. Some of our weekly newspapers have had a very large circulation, but the population of Great Britain France being more compact, there is a greater field in those countries for either dailies or weeklies than in the United States. By the next century however, when this country contains over 100,000,000 of inhabitants, the circulation of our journals will far exceed those published on the other side of the ocean, for our native population will not only be relatively but absolutely larger. This

is destined to be a great country for journalists, who will become more powerful eventually than any other class in the country.—From *Demorest's Monthly* for April.

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Cin., O., Nov. 16, 1881.  
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